

REMARKS

Claims 26 through 32 are pending, and claim 26 is amended herein.

Claims 26 through 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,888,681 to Barnes et al. ("Barnes, et al. patent") in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,548,506 to Srinivasan ("Srinivasan patent").

Claim 26 is amended herein to provide "upon the group resource limit being exceeded, enabling one or more communications restrictions to be implemented, the restrictions including terminating communication between the electronic groupware communication server and the communication units and selectively enabling predetermined types of communications to continue." The present invention relates to a system for governing communications when available resources have been exceeded. In particular, the system enables a user to utilize the excess group resources when assigned group resources have been exhausted. When the assigned group resources have been exhausted, communications may be terminated or restricted to specific types of communication. *See* Specification, pg. 25, line 14 et seq.

The Barnes, et al. patent and the Srinivasan patent do not describe or suggest a method for controlling communications between a server and communication units that, in response to exceeding a group resource limit, selectively enables predetermined types of communications to continue. The Barnes, et al. patent discloses a space management system having a termination

routine that cleans up control structures when implicit or explicit failures occur. The Srinivasan patent discloses an automatic project management coordination software running on a host server and interacting with a messaging system. Thus, the structure that would result from the Examiner's proposed combination would still lack a communication method that selectively enables predetermined types of communications to continue when a group resource limit is exceeded, as required by amended claim 26. Therefore, claim 26 as amended distinguishes patentably from the Barnes, et al. patent, the Srinivasan, patent and the combination of these patents.

Claims 27 through 32 depend from and include all of the limitations of independent claim 26. Therefore, claims 27 through 32 distinguish patentably from the Barnes, et al. patent, the Srinivasan, patent and the combination of these patents for the reasons stated above for amended claim 26.

For the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 26 through 32 are respectfully requested.

No amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references

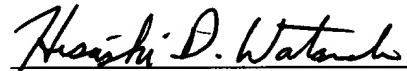
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The first page of the attached page(s) is captioned

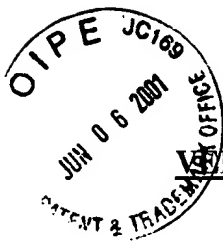
"VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

It is submitted that the claims clearly define the invention, are supported by the specification and drawings, and are in a condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions or concerns that may expedite prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
Eggleston, et al.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In The Claims:

Claim 26 has been amended and claims 27 through 32 remain unchanged as follows:

26. (Amended) A method of controlling communications between an electronic groupware communication server and communication units, the method, at the electronic groupware communication server, comprising:

assigning a use limit for group resources of a first group, wherein the first group has a predetermined number of users;

allowing users belonging to the first group to draw on unused group resources;

monitoring the use limit for group resources to determine if the use limit for group resources is exceeded; and

upon the group resource limit being exceeded, enabling one or more communications restrictions to be implemented, the restrictions including terminating communication between the electronic groupware communication server and the communication units ~~when the use limit for group resources is exceeded~~ and selectively enabling predetermined types of communications to continue.

27. (Unchanged) The method according to claim 26 wherein the use limit for group resources is based on a data transmission size of electronic mail messages received and transmitted.

28. (Unchanged) The method according to claim 26 wherein the use limit for group resources is based on an allocated expense for transmitting and receiving electronic mail messages.
29. (Unchanged) The method according to claim 26 further comprising:
assigning each user in the first group an individual use limit; and
monitoring the individual use limit of each user.
30. (Unchanged) The method according to claim 29 further comprising applying the individual use limit for individual electronic mail messages.
31. (Unchanged) The method according to claim 29 further comprising:
applying the individual use limit for individual electronic mail messages; and
applying the use limit for group resources for groupware data transfers.
32. (Unchanged) The method according to claim 26 further comprising applying the use limit for group resources for groupware data transfers.